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THE ROLE OF SLOVAK IMMIGRATION
in the DEVELOPMENT of a
SECOND PROTESTANT CHURCH in
HATFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

M.A. Rel. St. Essay
May 24, 1971


Alan C. Copithorne

INTRODUCTION

This paper is written for the people of Hatfield, Massachusetts. It is hoped that the information given will serve to further enrich the history of the community and to instill and encourage an appreciation of the role of Slovak immigration in the development of the town.

Materials gathered for this paper came primarily from personal interviews with several Hatfield residents who were either immigrants from Slovakia or children of Slovak-born parents. Also studied were the records of the Zion Synod (UCLA), the First Congregational Church of Hatfield, and the Town of Hatfield. Various materials dealing with immigration were also included in the research. The attempt has been, through the interviews and other research, to place a detailed study of Slovak immigration in Hatfield into the larger context of Hatfield's immigration history. Also of concern, and an equally important motive for the creation of this paper, were the details of the development of the second church of a Protestant tradition in Hatfield - the Slovak Lutheran church(es).

In a few significant ways this study has been limited. The records of the two Slovak congregations in Hatfield are in the Slovak language, and thus unreadable to the author.



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The location of these records was uncertain in the case of one of the churches, and unavailable in the case of the other. The persons interviewed seemed reluctant to go into precise details concerning the split that occurred within the body of Slovak Lutherans. Therefore, since the records of the Lutheran churches were unusable, and since the interviews did not provide answers to areas concerning disagreements, etc., the paper was forcibly limited.

The role of Slovak immigration in the development of a second Protestant church in Hatfield is told in five parts.

I. A Historical Review of Hatfield, 1670-1845 - this part deals with a brief survey of Hatfield's history in the years indicated. The year 1845 is used as a "break-off" point, for it is the year in which Irish immigration (the first immigrants to come to Hatfield) began in Hatfield.

II. Hatfield Reacts and Adjusts to Immigration, 1845-1900 - this part traces immigration in Hatfield, chronologically, from the Irish to the Polish "onslaughts" of the late 1890's. Attention is given to the reaction of the community, and the adjustments made, in light of the numbers of immigrants.

III. A History of the Slovaks in Europe and America - this part gives a background historical survey of the Slovaks in Europe, dealing most significantly with the

political and religious factors that caused the Slovaks to immigrate to America.

IV. The Slovaks Come to Hatfield - this part traces several Slovak families who settled in Hatfield in the immediate years following 1890.

V. The Second Protestant Church in Hatfield - this part details the development of a Slovak community in Hatfield and the resulting development of their own Slovak Lutheran Church.

PART ONE

A Historical Review of Hatfield 1670-1845

The town of Hatfield lies on the banks of the Connecticut River in the western part of Massachusetts. Built on a fertile valley flood plain, Hatfield has been and still is a small agricultural community. The population of the town in 1970 was approximately 2,500 persons. The history of the town, since its beginning in 1670, has been marked by the rather complete transition from a community of persons of English descent to a community of Irish, French, German, Polish and Slovak descendants, as well as English. The transition has been so complete that in 1970 the church membership in the community was, approximately ninety per cent Roman Catholic and ten per cent Protestant. Immigration from Western and Central Europe, therefore, has played a decisive role in the development of Hatfield. It is, specifically, the effects of immigration on church and community in Hatfield that is of concern in the following pages.

Not long after the landing of the Puritans and the settling of Boston, the settlers of the Massachusetts Bay colony heard of the beauty of the Connecticut River and valley lying a reported 160 miles to the west. The Dutch

already had established a trading post where the City of Hartford now stands. By 1634, settlers from the Massachusetts coast had moved to areas within the Connecticut Valley, establishing what are now Wethersfield and Windsor, Connecticut. Early in 1636, William Pynchon led some pioneers who settled in what is now Springfield, Massachusetts. The route of settlement continued north along the river, and in 1654, John Pynchon led settlers from Springfield, Windsor, and Hartford to begin the plantation of Nonotuck (now Northampton, Massachusetts). A few years later in 1658, religious dissenters from Hartford and Wethersfield petitioned the General Court of Massachusetts Bay to allow them to settle in the colony, around Northampton. The General Court agreed, and the inhabitants of Northampton allowed these dissenters to settle the Capawonk Meadows - which took in both sides of the Connecticut River. This new settlement was known as the Hadley plantation.

The "west side" settlements of the Hadley plantation began with the building of the first house, in 1660, by Richard Fellows. In total, sixteen families soon made the west side of the Hadley settlement their home. The trek to the east side of the river where the Hadley meeting house was, taking as long as two hours for the walk and canoe trip, was not easy. The west side settlers found "a great deal of difficulty in attending God's ordinances

on the other side of the river."¹ They began to hold "side meetings" to secure better religious privileges, and in 1668 they erected their own meeting house. For four years, the west side settlers disputed with the east side trying to become a separate town. Finally, on May 31, 1670, the General Court granted the petition of the west side settlers and the settlement became known as Hatfield. The Reverend Hope Atherton was the first minister. As town and church were one, the town could not have been incorporated without an established church and minister. By 1675, there were approximately 350 settlers in Hatfield.² The land area of the town expanded to encompass what is now called North Hatfield, Bradstreet, Whately, and Williamsburg. In 1771, these latter two became separate towns.

The Congregational Church was the mainstay of community life in Hatfield as in every New England community. The church and the town were virtually one. Several of the early pastors of Hatfield were prominent men. The Reverend William Williams who was pastor from 1686 to 1741, is noted for denying the famous George Whitefield the pulpit of the

¹First Congregational Church of Hatfield, Massachusetts 1670 - Tercentenary - 1970 (Northampton: Cooper Printing, 1970), p. 2.

²Town of Hatfield, Hatfield (Northampton: Gazette Printing, 1970), p. 7.

Hatfield church during the Great Awakening.³ The Reverend Dr. Joseph Lyman, pastor from 1772 to 1828, was one of the first presidents of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. The first gift to the American Board came from the Hatfield church.⁴ In 1829, the church and town were separated, but the church and parish still maintained a dominating influence on town affairs. When, in 1849, a new and large church building was constructed (the present building), the plans called for the building to accommodate the entire town. Thus the church building has a capacity of approximately 500.

The years from 1670 to 1845 were ones of growth and prosperity. Life was regular and orderly, with little disruption. People remained hard working and loyal, both to the town and church. The spread of Unitarianism in the early nineteenth century did cause a few to "sign off" from the support of the church and parish, but no attempt was made to form a new religious society. Meetings were held by Methodists in the town hall during the years 1844-1846, but again no new religious society was formed. By 1845, however, a new era was about to intrude upon the rural New England regularity of Hatfield - an era of immigration.

³First Congregational Church, Tercentenary, p. 5.

⁴Town of Hatfield, Hatfield, p. 39.

PART TWO

Hatfield Reacts and Adjusts to Immigration 1845-1900

I

The statistics concerning Hatfield's population from 1670 until the beginning of the twentieth century reflect the effects of immigration upon the town. It is significant that the population of Hatfield in 1675 was approximately 350 persons. By 1800, the population of the town had increased to 800.⁵ The intervening years had been ones of slow growth and settlement. In fact, in 1800, there were only two persons of foreign birth in Hatfield.⁶ The remainder were American-born stock of the original settlers.

From 1825 to 1850, however, there was a marked change in population. This was a period of migration out of Hatfield to the West. There are records of a Eurotus Morton of Hatfield, settling in Rawsonville, Michigan, in 1837.⁷

⁵Charles A. Wight, The Hatfield Book (Springfield: Bassette Company, 1908), p. 16.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Town of Hatfield, Hatfield, p. 43.

Hatfield's population continued to grow, however, despite the fact that whole families were moving out. The explanation for the increase is that matching the migration of Hatfield's citizens was the immigration of the first foreigners: the French from "lower" Canada, the Irish, and the Germans.

One should make clear the point that every settler of Hatfield, from the first one in 1660 to the last one in 1971, is an immigrant in a sense. The first known inhabitants of Hatfield were not the Puritans but rather the indigent Indians. Thus the first immigrants were, "A dozen or so English families who had left England and two earlier settlements in America, in protest against restrictions of their religious liberty."⁸

The local Indians were inclined to regard the English Puritan newcomer as a foreigner, and in the same way, the "native" Puritan settler was to regard other foreign born persons as newcomers. The first "foreigner" recorded in Hatfield's history was Henry Wilkie, a Hessian soldier from the army of General Burgoyne. Wilkie stayed in Hatfield following the Revolutionary War, thus being Hatfield's first

⁸Scrapbook of Undated and Unidentifiable Newspaper Clippings, Hatfield Museum.

immigrant.⁹ Hatfield remained "a town of solidly native Congregationalist immigrants" from 1670 until 1850.

II

The Irish were the first foreign born people to settle in Hatfield in large numbers. They were the beginnings of the first wave of new immigrants. The year 1847 is significant here as the year of the Irish Potato Famine. While there were a few Irish in Hatfield prior to 1847, the famine in Ireland was the cause for mass Irish immigration to America, and subsequently to Hatfield. "The Irish came from want and hunger and many were willing to work for less than local people demanded in Hatfield."¹⁰ The Irish came and worked in the fields, shops, and homes of the Yankees. The first recorded birth in Hatfield of a child from parents born in Ireland was a son born August 17, 1849, to Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Martin (who were born in Rosecommon, Ireland.)¹¹

⁹Wight, Hatfield, p. 17.

¹⁰Town of Hatfield, Hatfield, p. 46.

¹¹Hatfield, Massachusetts, Records of Births, Marriages, and Deaths (1848-1930), I.

Among the earliest Irish families settling in Hatfield were: Boyle, Clancy, Michael Day (O'Dea), Fitzgibbons, Michael Hade, James Leary, John McHugh, Matthew Nolan, Powers, Ryan, and Whalen.

Broom corn was one of the first cash crops raised in Hatfield. As the production of brooms became more and more important in the town, outside laborers were brought in during the summer. French-Canadians from Lower Canada came in large numbers prior to 1850, during the summers only, to work in the broom corn fields. The need for expert broom tiers, which the French were, was the chief cause of their immigration becoming permanent. In the Saint Lawrence River settlements from which many of the French immigrants came, there were very few women. As missionaries had converted the Indians in the area, the Frenchmen were urged to marry Christian converts, thus establishing Christian families. With the immigration of the French-Canadians to Hatfield, many families in Hatfield came to claim Indian blood in their heritage.¹²

The failure of the 1848 revolution in Germany was the chief cause of the mass migration of Germans to the United States. There were a few Germans in Hatfield by 1845. The Town Records indicate the birth of a son on November 24, 1852, to Lyman Warner and Rosina Sydell (the mother

¹²Town of Hatfield, Hatfield, p. 46.

The earliest French settlers were Peter Balise, Anthony Bolack, James Breor, Anthony Douglas, and Edward Proulx.

was born in Saxnoy, Germany).¹³ In 1855, the first full family of Germans settled in Hatfield: Christian Carl, his wife, sons Philip, Frederick, and Jacob, and three daughters.¹⁴ Many of these German immigrants settled in a new area of Hatfield called Pantry Road (in the part of town called West Hatfield). Language, for the first time, posed a significant problem. The Germans knew no English, and although they were not a large group compared to the numbers of Irish and French, their lot was harder because of the language barrier.

In 1875 the town reached a population of 1,600 persons. The first wave of immigration had ended in America and the period from 1860 to 1880 was to be a giant pause, awaiting the next opening of the gates into the country. Hatfield felt that pause, and the statistics for the years following 1875 show the decline in population as migration had ended and immigration was curtailed:¹⁵

<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>
1875	1,600
1880	1,495
1885	1,367
1890	1,246
1895	1,262

¹³Hatfield, Records, I.

¹⁴Other German settlers were Peter Saffer, Adam Doppman, George Vollinger, Frank Newman, George Chandler, Gottliet Decker, Joseph and Peter Stoddard and Frank Steele.

¹⁵Daniel W. and Reuben F. Wells, A History of Hatfield, Massachusetts (Springfield: Gibbons Company, 1910), p. 478.



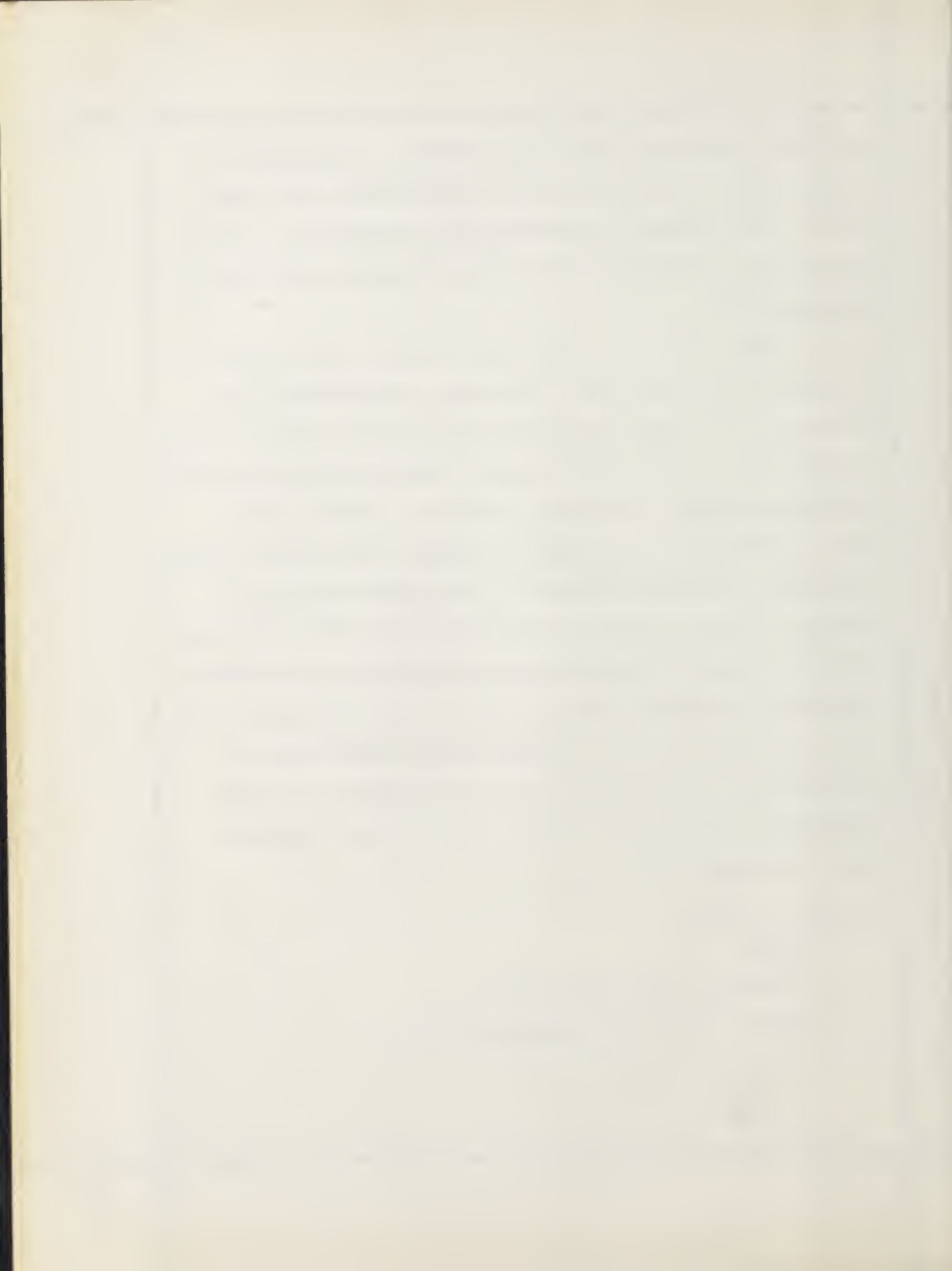
The year 1895 showed the first increase in population in twenty years. The second wave of immigration had begun, and by 1905 Hatfield's population had increased to 1,779, due mainly to the tremendous influx of Polish and Slovak immigrants.¹⁶

By 1890, the first Poles were brought into Hatfield as laborers for the Irish. The Irish entrepreneurs from Hatfield lured Polish immigrants coming into Boston to come to Hatfield to work in the fields of what were by then their prosperous farms. Soon whole families of Polish people were migrating into Hatfield "in numbers far exceeding what the Irish businessmen wanted."¹⁷ The Poles had come to America, in many cases, to escape enlistment into the army. Poland was then occuppied by Russia, Austria, and Germany, and when a young man became of age he faced enlistment in one of the three armies. Parents gladly permitted the immigration of their sons, and the governments of Poland considered immigration a wise policy, "so as to prevent over population."¹⁸

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Scrapbook, Hatfield Museum.

¹⁸Town of Hatfield, Hatfield, p. 58.



The first Poles recorded as settling in Hatfield were Joseph Vishaway and Joseph Goclowski. Mr. Goclowski worked on the large Belden Farm in the Bradstreet section of Hatfield, and was known as "Joe Belden," since the Yankees had difficulty in pronouncing his real name! The first recorded Polish birth found in the Town Records is that of a daughter born on March 13, 1892, to Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Goeck.

One native of the community remarked concerning the growing number of Poles and other immigrants, "the old town is becoming exceedingly cosmopolitan for a quiet farming community." Thus the period of Polish immigration, beginning in the late nineteenth century, marked the completion of the transition that turned Hatfield into a community of immigrants.

After the year 1900, Hatfield was a town comprised mainly of foreign born persons, or descendants of foreign born parents. The 1900 census showed the population of the town to be 1,500. Of this figure, approximately 1,000 were either of Polish, Irish, German, or French birth (or origin). Of 66 children born in Hatfield in 1907, 43 were of foreign born parents.¹⁹ In 1908 it was said that "English is the native tongue of scarcely two-thirds of the

¹⁹Wight, Hatfield, p. 17.



people (of Hatfield)." ²⁰ In the same year, two-thirds of the population of Hatfield was composed of persons either foreign born or children of foreign born parents. ²¹ And by 1920, the percentages had increased so that four-fifths of the inhabitants of Hatfield were of foreign stock. ²²

III

The numerical evidence clearly indicates the presence of large numbers of foreign born persons in Hatfield. The immediate problem was then one of settling and assimilation. At a Biennial State Convention of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, held in Boston in the 1920's, ²³ a speech was given by a Mr. John Daniels, in which he traced the cultural integration of the community of Hatfield, from the arrival of the English colonials to the "Polish Invasion" of 1905. Referring to all immigrants in Hatfield, Daniels said:

By virtue of industry and thrift, they soon began to get ahead, and brought up the rocky, stumpy, semi-abandoned farms and made them productive; edged into sections of the village that

²⁰Wells, Hatfield, p. 234. ²¹Wight, Hatfield, p. 16.

²²Brewer, Conquest of New England, p. 247.

²³Scrapbook, Hatfield Museum. The details on the meeting were taken from a clipping found in the scrapbook. The clipping is undated and no reference is made as to the newspaper it came from. The article mentions Governor Curley (Massachusetts), and refers to "the World War." Therefore, the date of the speech is assumed to be in the 1920's.



the Yankees were willing to let them occupy; started to send their children to the school, and ventured to attend, and take part in the sacred town meetings.²⁴

Daniels went on to offer four factors that enabled the transformation of the immigrants from aliens to neighbors. First was the mingling of the children at the schools. Second, Daniels felt that the natural interest of parents in what their children do at school and in what their children told them about other children and other children's parents helped the assimilation process. Third, was the effects of the interchange that took place among the Yankees and those Irish and Germans employed in their homes. And finally, Daniels felt that the Yankees themselves helped "bridge the gap" by their time-honored custom of visiting and offering friendly assistance at times of illness, birth, or death.

The assimilation process seemed complete. One old resident of the town remarked, "Most of us Yankees don't think of them as foreigners anymore. They are our own neighbors and friends."²⁵ Daniels, in his speech, concluded by saying, "the community is achieving a civil, political,

²⁴Scrapbook, Hatfield Museum.

²⁵Ibid.

economic, and social unity." Wight, in his history of Hatfield, expounds in glorious tones:

Hatfield affords a fine example of the harmonious mingling of the people of different nationalities in community life under our free institutions. If the conditions existing in Hatfield prevailed everywhere in the United States, our country would have no problem occasioned by the presence of foreigners.²⁶

One can indeed question whether the mingling was as easy and wonderful as Wight indicates. Perhaps the acceptance of these new residents in Hatfield was on a more practical level, as Wight himself intimates: "Without the help of this new increment of population, it would be impossible to cultivate the extensive crops of onions and tobacco."²⁷

A night school was established in the 1920's to help the "newcomers" become better acquainted with the American way of life, and to offer them training in English and other academic courses. The school was on a twelve week basis, with classes offered two evenings a week. The curriculum included reading, writing, and basic arithmetic. The immigrants from Central Europe benefited the most, as the language barrier was a problem for them. Over 150 people enrolled, so that in time more teachers were added and classes held four evenings a week.

²⁶Wight, Hatfield, p. 18.

²⁷Ibid., p. 17.

An indication of the assimilation and acceptance of the Irish is seen in their involvement in town affairs. In 1890, the election of the first "foreign born" person to the Board of Selectmen took place. Matthew J. Ryan, an Irishman, was elected to that position.²⁸ Since then, one or more of the three man board has been of "foreign stock.

A funeral notice in the local Northampton paper gives an indication of the "settling in" of another nationality, the Germans.

Mrs. Christian Carl died September 25, at the age of 74 years. She was a native of Saxony, now a part of the German empire. She emigrated to Hatfield in 1855 with her husband, four daughters, and three sons (the eldest son, Jacob, had come in 1854 to prepare the way).

Her four sons settled and married in Hatfield. Wholly through their own thrift and industry have they won success as farmers and are prominent citizens of Hatfield, men of business, and widely known and respected throughout the Connecticut Valley.

Mrs. Carl came to Hatfield without any knowledge of English, and at a late age in which to learn a new tongue. She was not discouraged, but showed unusual readiness and adaptability in taking on new customs and ways.

She was a woman of firm principles and positive character. She was an eminent Christian, the first of the family to join the Congregational Church; a church which was so different in customs and ways from the one in the old country.

She was faithful in her attendance upon the religious services and rejoiced in the prosperity of

²⁸Wells, Hatfield, p. 484.



the church. The funeral services were conducted by her loved pastor, Rev. R. M. Woods.²⁹

IV

Settlement in Hatfield had occurred first along the banks of the Connecticut River. Moving west, large acres of meadows and farm land separated the next area of settlement in the town. Thus "West Hatfield" was four to five miles from the village center. There was a nucleus of native residents in West Hatfield - Bradford, John Strong, Alvin Strong, William Cutter, and Silas Dwight. As the Germans immigrated into the town, many of them settled in West Hatfield - Wentzel, Hilburt, Kleasner, Omasta, Undras. The distance into the center to attend church and Sabbath School was great and required two round trips each Sabbath. Beginning in the 1880's, monthly services were conducted in the homes of members in West Hatfield by the pastor of the church.

On December 13, 1888, a meeting was held in the home of Silas Dwight to consider the possibility of building a

²⁹Scrapbook, Hatfield Museum. This account is taken from a clipping found in the scrapbook, which was not dated. By her age, it is guessed that she died in the 1870's or 1880's.

Amendments:

Pg. 16 -

West Hatfield is
2 miles from
center - not 4-5.

Omasta and Andras
families were
Slovak, not
Germans. (am's)

chapel to be used for monthly and special services, and for Sabbath School. The response was most eager, and the following materials were subscribed the same day: 3,000 feet of lumber, 35 days of work, \$80.00 in cash, and a site for a building.³⁰ The West Hatfield Union Chapel Society was officially organized on December 31, 1888, by a group of West Hatfield Yankees and German protestants. A. L. Strong, S. S. Dwight, Philip Carl, and M. F. Bradford assumed responsible positions in the Society.³¹ The first service was held in the chapel on Sunday evening, July 21, 1889, with the wedding of Viva D. Curtis and Clifford Jacobs performed by Pastor Woods that same day.³²

The West Hatfield Chapel was used by the Congregationalists for Wednesday evening prayer meetings, for Christian Endeavor meetings for all the young people in the area, and for a fourth Sunday evening worship service. By December of 1889, a Sabbath School class was being conducted in West Hatfield, with an average attendance of 52.³³ Thus the Yankees and Germans of West Hatfield were ministered to in

³⁰Hampshire Gazette and Northampton Courier, December 18, 1888, p. 1.

³¹Holy Trinity Lutheran Church of Hatfield, "History of the Church Before Purchase by the Present Congregation," Hatfield, 1950, p. 1. (mimeographed)

³²Hampshire Gazette, July 23, 1889, p. 5.

³³Hatfield Congregational Church, Records of the Church, meeting on December 18, 1889. (handwritten).

Pg 17
Land was donated
by the Cutter family.

as noted by;
Mary Lou Cutter
1991

a more accommodating manner by the use of the chapel. The chapel was later to be instrumental in aiding another immigrant group.

V

The Chapel was built during the pastorate of a man most instrumental in creating a receptive attitude on the part of the Hatfield church to the immigrants: the Reverend Dr. Robert M. Woods. Robert Woods served the Hatfield church from his ordination in 1877 until his death in 1909. Under his pastorate, the missionary work of the church was encouraged and expanded. According to one observer, "Minister Woods" loved all people, although he was not a good preacher.³⁴ Woods baptized and married the Protestant immigrants, with many of the ceremonies conducted at the West Hatfield Chapel. A humorous story is told of Mr. Woods, who was a total abstainer, at the reception following a wedding for a Slovak family. "He (Woods) hovered around the punch bowl, imbibing quite freely as he conversed. He remarked how good the punch was, and then was told that the punch was spiked."³⁵

³⁴Marian C. Billings, personal interview, Hatfield, March 6, 1971.

³⁵Ibid.

Sunday afternoon was Minister Woods' habitual calling time. Every Sunday afternoon, around 4:00 P.M., Woods would visit the foreign families, using a bicycle as transportation in the warm weather. His concern for the immigrants was expressed in his generosity. Many a ton of coal and many a barrel of flour was provided by Minister Woods. A particular incident is recorded of an illness in a poor German family in the western part of Hatfield. Woods visited them often, prayed with them in German, and presented them with a barrel of flour.³⁶

Robert Woods has been accurately called the "Bishop of Hatfield." He considered the whole town his parish. The town's interests were his interests, and his influence was wide. At a memorial address delivered November 28, 1909, President L. Clarke Seelye of Smith College said of Woods:

The foreigners who have come in recent years to Hatfield so that they now form a large and important element in its population, were especially sought out by him that he might bring them under Christian influence and help them to become good citizens. If they were Protestants ... he sought to interest them in the church in Hatfield and to interest the church in them. They were persuaded to bring their children to Sunday School, and to

³⁶Wight, Hatfield, p. 46.

place themselves under those influences which would help them to resist the temptations to evil which beset strangers in a strange land. With the Catholics of the town he was on friendly terms. When they were numerous enough to form a church of their own persuasion, he was ready to aid them to establish it, believing it was far better for them in the present divergence between Catholics and Protestants to have a church in which they could conscientiously worship than to be without church fellowship.

There was no attempt to form another Protestant church of a different polity during his pastorate, and few cared to seek spiritual aid and counsel elsewhere.³⁷

As Seeyle's testimony indicates, Robert Woods was instrumental in the Congregational Church's "open arms" policy towards the immigrants. He more than any other single man in Hatfield, helped the "foreigners" totally settle in to the community.

VI

The larger majority of the immigrants coming into Hatfield were of the Roman Catholic persuasion. The 1900 Town Census reported that all Poles in the community were Catholic, except for 40 Hungarian Poles who were Protestant.³⁸ The Irish were Catholic, as were the French. The only foreign groups with Protestant heritages were the Germans and, later, the Slovaks.

³⁷Wells, Hatfield, pp. 242-243.

³⁸Wight, Hatfield, p. 17.

As the number of Catholics in the community increased, the desire for Mass to be held in town increased. In the early days of Irish and French immigration, Hatfield's Catholics went to neighboring Northampton for services. In 1879, there were sufficient Catholics in town so that permission was granted by the "ruling" Protestants for the Catholics to have Mass said once a month in the town's Smith Academy. A subscription fund for a church building was started in 1891, and in 1892, St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church was built. The first Mass said in the new church was on New Year's Day, 1893.³⁹ The membership of the church was primarily of Irish and French orientation, and to this day (1971) is known as the "Irish" church.

As the Poles came into Hatfield, their religious needs were met by St. Joseph's church. The Poles soon outgrew their Irish neighbors, however, and they wished their own parish. St. Michael's Society was formed in 1908 for the purpose of forming a Polish parish. In 1913 the society purchased land and donated it to the Holy Trinity parish, which was formed by incorporation in 1917. Holy Trinity Church was completed in 1919. This parish was an ethnic

³⁹Town of Hatfield, 1670 - Tercentenary Year - 1970 (Northampton: Gazette Printing, 1970), p. 8.

parish, with Polish as the language of the Mass. The first priest was the Reverend Stanley Zdebel.⁴⁰

John Daniels, in his speech to the Biennial State Convention of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, concluded his remarks by referring to the religious spirit of the immigrants. Viewing their assimilation and growth in Hatfield, Daniels said:

As it happened, the French, Irish, and Poles were all Catholics, and so vis-a-vis the Yankee Congregationalist Church, they established their own Catholic Church, and like the Yankees, proceeded to grow up around the church.⁴¹

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 10.

⁴¹Scrapbook, Hatfield Museum.

PART THREE

A History of the Slovaks in Europe and America

I

In the preceding pages there have been brief references to another group of immigrants that settled in Hatfield: The Slovaks. The reaction and adjustment that Hatfield underwent in the face of massive immigration has already been examined. The following pages will examine the Slovaks as one of the new nationalities that made up the total "foreign" population. Although small in number, the Slovaks were to be the cause for the establishment of a second Protestant church in a town which, for two hundred and fifty years, had only one Protestant congregation.

The Slovak people have no independent political history in Europe. Over the centuries of their existence as a people, the Slovak nation has been under Polish, Hungarian (Magyar), and Czech rule. They are a people who are similar in many ways to the other peoples of central Europe. The Slovak language is akin to Polish and Russian, and is related to Serbian and Croatian.

The Battle of Pressburg, in 907 A.D., resulted in the Magyar becoming the master of the Slovak people. However, the influence and pressure of the Germanic nations

meant that the Hungarians were still in a subordinate position. When, after the German revolution of 1848, the Hungarians rose to a position of equality with the Germans, the history of the Slovak people that was to have a direct bearing on their immigration to America commences.

Out of this elevation to equality in influence, came ultimately the establishment of the dual monarchy of Austria-Hungary in 1867. Scattered throughout the new monarchy were Slovaks. A history of persecution for the Slovaks began. "In Austria, the aim of the government was to Germanize the Slovak population; in Hungary, to Magyarize them."⁴² The Slovaks lived primarily in the 24 northwestern counties of Hungary (pre-World War I). Hungarians, or Magyars, in Hungary were numerically in the minority in relation to the Slovaks.⁴³ The Hungarians bent all their efforts into a forcible policy of de-nationalization towards all non-Hungarian racial groups. The policy was, simply, "that in Hungary, there can only be Hungarian culture."⁴⁴ The implementation of this policy of de-nationalization was

⁴²Kenneth D. Miller, The Czecho-Slovaks in America (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1922), p. 15.

⁴³George Dolack, A History of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States of America, 1902-1927 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955), p. 3.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 4.

to effect mainly the Slovaks, and was for them a policy of persecution.

One of the processes of denationalization involved the sole use of the Hungarian language. The Slovaks had earlier established language schools in order to maintain their heritage as a people. In 1874, the three main Slovak schools were closed, and in 1875 the Slovak Academy of Arts and Sciences was closed and its property confiscated. The Electoral Law of 1874 so stringently set voting requirements and procedures that it made it virtually impossible to elect a Slovak representative to the Hungarian Parliament. This aspect of "Magyarization" was so successful that the Slovak people abandoned all efforts to elect Parliamentary representatives from 1881 to 1890.⁴⁵ By setting certain policies as normal procedure, the Hungarians were able to carry out their process of de-nationalization quite smoothly. For example, to be a juror, one had to have an income of 400 crowns and had to know Hungarian. Thus, not many Slovaks appeared on the juries which tried them. It became apparent that "the only possibility for advancement in public life for a non-Magyar lay in becoming completely Hungarianized."⁴⁶

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 5.

Persecution at the hands of the Hungarians knew no limits. Slovak children were deported to other parts of the empire (to present day Yugoslavia), "for their own benefit."

Between 1874 and 1900, the Hungarians conducted six such expeditions, deporting at least 889 children.⁴⁷ The Hungarian government refused to charter Slovak banks, or to license business establishments. Slovak libraries were destroyed and editors of Slovak newspapers were sued. The fertile land in the counties in which the Slovaks lived were in the hands of rich, Hungarian, land owners. Over-taxation of the Slovaks was common, and indeed the Slovaks lived in a "modern feudal system; the position of Slovakia as a province of the Kingdom of Hungary was one of virtual slavery."⁴⁸ The position of the Slovak in Hungary is made graphically clear by the following statement by Premier Koloman Tisa (of Austria-Hungary) in the Hungarian Parliament, December 15, 1875: "The Slovak is not a human being."⁴⁹

In some unknown way through the years of persecution, the Slovaks managed to keep "the flame of Slovak national feeling from dying out all together."⁵⁰ The Slovak village was very likely a chief contributor towards keeping the

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 6.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 7.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 6.

⁵⁰Miller, Czecho-Slovaks, p. 16.

flame burning. The village, with its church, tavern, and marketplace, functioned for the Slovak in the same manner as the New England town and town meeting functioned for the Yankee. Indeed, when the Slovaks came to America, they were eager to establish colonies of their own kind, where they would be together in one compact community. The distinct village consciousness of the Slovaks helped preserve them during their days of persecution. With a history such as the Slovaks experienced since the days of Hungarian domination, it is no wonder "that the Slovak looked upon America as a land of golden opportunity and hastened to make his way thither when the door opened."⁵¹

Christianity was introduced to the Slovaks by two Slavic missionaries, Cyril and Methodius, in the ninth century. Slovakia, because of its location, also came under the influence of the Eastern Church: The Roman Church was never completely accepted by the people. "People were (becoming) convinced that Roman Catholicism and Germanism were proceeding hand in hand, and so thus heightened suspicion of Rome."⁵²

The advent of John Hus gave the Slovaks a spokesman who voiced the suspicions that they held. Hus, from

⁵¹Ibid., p. 26.

⁵²Ibid., p. 32.

Czechia (Bohemia), was one of the pre-Reformation leaders. His criticisms and demands of the Roman church were three-fold: the rejection of indulgences and the Papacy, the demand for a moral life on the part of clergy as well as laity, and the restoration of the cup to the people at the Eucharist. For these views, John Hus was burned alive on July 6, 1415. His death initiated an open revolt within the region against Rome. The Hussite Wars lasted about 100 years in Central Europe. The significant result of the Hussite Wars was not that the Hussites were defeated but rather that the ground was prepared for the Lutheran Reformation of the sixteenth century.

On October 31, 1517, Martin Luther posted his 95 Theses and the Lutheran Reformation began. "Since the ground had been prepared by the Hussites, Luther's work was quickly known in Slovakia, and practically all Slovaks turned Lutheran."⁵³ The first Lutheran congregation was established in Nove Misto, Nitrianski Stolica, in 1522.⁵⁴ In Slovakia, more than in any other part of Central Europe,

⁵³John Zornan, A Catechism on Slovak Lutherans (Sharon, Pennsylvania: Hickory Commerical Printing Company, 1958) p. 3.

⁵⁴S. G. Mazak, "A Brief History of the Slovak Lutheran Synod of the United States," The Concordia Historical Institute Quartely, III (October, 1930), p. 80.

Reformation period Protestantism gained more influence. Generally, Hungary was more Protestant than Austria.

A counter-reformation came to Central Europe, however. In 1523, the Diet at Budapest passed a law that all Lutherans were to lose title to their property and be executed.⁵⁵ The result was the forcible re-institution of Roman Catholicism on the Slovaks, and for over 200 years the Slovak Lutherans were persecuted. By 1674, 800 churches had been taken from the Slovak Lutherans and given to the Catholics. In 1682, a law was passed that allowed for only two Lutheran churches in any one county.⁵⁶

Protestants in Slovakia continued to meet secretly for over two hundred years. Not until the reign of Maria Theresa (middle 18th century) were the Jesuits finally suppressed (i.e. dissolved). Her son, Joseph II, gave the "Patent of Tolerance" in 1781, which allowed for freedom of religious expression for Lutherans. There still was not complete freedom for the Slovak Lutherans, however, for religion was still severely limited and state-controlled by the Hapsburg monarchs.

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Zornan, Slovak Lutherans, p. 3.

Under the rule of the Austrian-Hungary Empire, the Lutheran Church permitted itself to be used as a tool of the government in the enforcement of the policy of Magyarization. Hungarian services were forced upon the Slovaks and church records were kept in Hungarian. The Lutheran Church became so complete a tool of the government, that in 1882, the Church declared that "panslavism was a canonical transgression."⁵⁷

Persecution, then, was characteristic of the political and religious history of the Slovak people in Europe. It becomes quite understandable, in view of this history of persecution, that the Slovaks made their way to America at the first "golden" opportunity.

II

Emigration from Slovakia was the response of many Slovaks to the persecutions they had suffered for so many years. They left their homeland because the policy of Magyarization was stifling them. They left because of the low economic level on which the average Slovak was compelled

⁵⁷Dolack, Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church, p. 8. PanSlavism was any expression of nationalism considered detrimental to the Austria-Hungary Empire.

to subsist. Some left Slovakia because of the religious persecution, and still others left to avoid compulsory military service in the armies of their dominators. The Slovaks left, for "a hungry man is not concerned with grammars, be they Magyar or Slovak, what he wants is bread."⁵⁸

Most of the Slovak immigrants to the United States in the late nineteenth - early twentieth century were from Eastern Slovakia. Upon arriving in America, the Slovaks settled mainly in the Eastern states, although some went immediately to Minnesota and Illinois. There were some Slovaks coming to America far prior to the 1880's and 1890's. A Count Benovsky, who came during the Revolutionary War in America, is said to be the first Slovak immigrant.⁵⁹ A Slovak colony had been established in Streator, Illinois, as early as 1873; and in New York City by 1879. By the year 1880, there were 50 or 60 Slovaks living in the City of Chicago. The Slovaks came to the soft coal regions of eastern Pennsylvania by 1885. The total pattern of

⁵⁸Dolack, Slovak Church, p. 10.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 11.

Slovak immigration to the United States is seen by the following table:⁶⁰

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Number</u>
1899	15,838	1910	32,416
1900	29,243	1911	21,415
1901	29,343	1912	25,281
1902	36,934	1913	27,234
1903	34,427	1914	25,319
1904	27,940	1915	2,069
1905	52,367	1916	577
1906	38,221	1917	244
1907	42,041	1918	35
1908	16,170	1919	85
1909	22,586	1920	3,824

The total Slovak immigration into the United States from 1899 to 1920, was 484,109. The 1910 Federal Census recorded 1,444 Slovaks in Massachusetts.⁶¹ The Slovaks emigrated in such great numbers that in 1903, the Hungarian government was forced to pass the Law of 1903, which put limits on who could leave the country, in order to "limit the wanton emigration."⁶²

The oldest Slovak colonies in the United States are found in Pennsylvania (Freeland, Nanticoke, Mahanoy City), Illinois (Streator), and Minnesota (Minneapolis). In most cases a rather long interval elapsed between the Slovak

⁶⁰Miller, Czecho-Slovaks, p. 44.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 50.

⁶²Dolack, Slovak Evangelical Church, p. 12.

immigrants arrival in the United States and the founding of national churches and cultural institutions. The Slovaks main concern was food and earning a living. This had to come before the re-assembling of a cultural heritage.⁶³

Employment and money were the two goals of most Slovaks upon arriving in a town or city. Because of the language problem and the high cost of farm land, most Slovaks were forced to work in industry although coming with an agricultural background. His inability to speak English meant ridicule for many of the new Slovak immigrants, yet he was determined to make money here.

The Slovak often immigrated alone, leaving his wife and children in Europe. "The Slovak ... looked upon America as a place to make money to take backhome."⁶⁴ About one-fourth of the Slovak men who immigrated to America actually returned after making their money; in many instances, as soon as enough money for passage was saved, the Slovak sent for his family.⁶⁵ However, the intent of many of the Slovaks to return to Slovakia was an important factor in the Slovaks resisting assimilation. They were restless at the

⁶³Ibid., p. 10.

⁶⁴Miller, Czecho-Slovaks, p. 45.

⁶⁵Dolack, Slovak Evangelical Church, p. 13.

outset of their American experience, ever hoping to return with the money that would improve their status in their homeland. The Slovaks were able to save their money rapidly. "It was not uncommon for Slovaks (who did go back) to return home with \$5,000 of savings accumulated in a few years."⁶⁶

When the Slovaks settled in America, they sought areas into which their own countrymen had already moved. They quickly organized social clubs in order to engage in "good times" together. Wxamples of these clubs are the National Slovak Society (1890), Zivena (the same as the latter except for women, established in 1891), and the Slovak Evangelical Union (1893). By 1899, there were fourteen such societies in the United States.⁶⁷ The language problem was great. Their ability to mingle with Americans was made difficult because of this barrier. Language was also to be a barrier between the first generation immigrants and their offspring, who through the schools primarily, became Americanized quickly. The Slovaks remained industrial workers for the most part in the first years of their life

⁶⁶Miller, Czecho-Slovaks, p. 63.

⁶⁷Dolack, Slovak Evangelical Church, pp. 14-15.

in America. The Annual Report of the Commissioner General of Immigration included a listing of Slovak occupations for the period 1909 to 1919:⁶⁸

<u>OCCUPATION</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>
Professional	95
Skilled	5,947
Unskilled	79,028
Agricultural	34,330
Laborers	27,412
Servants	16,862

As the Slovaks increased in number and secured themselves in their location, they were able to tend to matters other than bread and work. Their first concern was their religious health, and the re-assembling of their Slovak culture in a new and strange land.

Many of the Slovaks who immigrated to the United States were of the Lutheran tradition. The Lutheran Church of Hungary, which was felt by many Slovaks to be a puppet of the Magyars, made no provisions for "its children across the sea." Not until 1914 did the Church send a representative to visit the churches in America which consisted of former Hungarian Lutherans; and even then the choice of representatives was unwise, for the man sent, Bishop Alexander Raffy, could speak no Slovak! Concern was raised then, by the American Slovaks, as to their spiritual health

⁶⁸Miller, Czecho-Slovaks, p. 55.

due to the lack of Slovak pastors. Some Slovaks held worship in their own homes, while others sought the company of non-Slovak congregations. "Thus many attended sectarian churches, where was soon sown the spirit of indifferentism and unionism, which later on placed obstacles in the way of a true union of the Slovak Lutherans in America."⁶⁹ As the number of Slovaks in America increased, the problems became more pressing concerning their religious welfare. Increasing numbers precluded the use of homes, and finances offered difficulties in renting or building. Most severely felt of the problems was the complete lack (and later a shortage) of Slovak pastors. Many Slovak Lutheran immigrants were undoubtedly "lost" to the Lutheran Church in the early years of settlement.⁷⁰

Other Lutheran bodies did offer aid and concern to the Slovaks. The (German) Pennsylvania Ministerium served the Slovaks in the Wilkes-Barre coal regions. The Missouri Synod (of German origin) also ministered to the Slovaks by administering the Sacraments, providing classes in Slovak, granting the use of churches and schools for the Slovaks, counseling, and loaning money. Various other Protestant

⁶⁹Mazak, "Slovak Lutheran Synod," p. 84.

⁷⁰Dolack, Slovak Evangelical Church, p. 19.

denominations aided the Slovaks as well. "If no Lutheran pastor was available when he needed the services of the church, the Slovak immigrant usually called upon the nearest pastor, regardless of denominational affiliation."⁷¹

One of the Lutheran organizations, the General Council of the Lutheran Church, had as part of its mission activity work with Slavic and Hungarian immigrants. The Slav and Hungarian Mission Board was started in 1905, for "a lack of suitable laborers is particularly felt in this work." In 1918 there were seventeen Slovak missions sponsored by the Slav and Hungarian Board.⁷²

The Mission Board of the General Council of Lutheran Churches in the United States called for men to work in North America with the Slovaks. The Board sent its plea to Slovakia and in 1882, Karol Horak came to the United States to work with the Slovaks. He was shortly thereafter ordained, and became the first Slovak pastor ordained in the United States for work among Slovak Lutherans.⁷³ In 1884, the Reverend Cyril Droppa came from Slovakia to America, and became the pastor of the first organized

⁷¹Ibid., p. 18.

⁷²J. L. Neve, History of the Lutheran Church in America (Burlington, Iowa: The Lutheran Literary Board, 1934), p. 167.

⁷³Dolack, Slovak Evangelical Church, p. 16.

Slovak Lutheran congregation in the United States - Holy Trinity Slovak Lutheran Church, Streator, Illinois.⁷⁴

Other Slovak pastors came, but precious few. The circuits of these pastors covered vast distances in order to accommodate the Slovak congregations. The congregation at Bonne Terre, Missouri, was at one time served by the pastor in Chicago!

As organized congregations, the Slovak Lutherans represented "transplanted churches." The Lutheran Church in Slovakia was conservative, formalistic, and ritualistic; not at all missionary minded. The "soul-winning" function of the church was stressed. Given these characteristics, Slovak Lutheranism was more Catholic than Protestant. The Slovaks flocked together in settling in the United States, "and at the earliest possible moment secured the services of a Slovak pastor who could minister to them in their own tongue."⁷⁵ The churches that emerged were imitations of those in the "old country."

The early Slovak Lutheran congregations were troubled by factions and open splits. One congregation was split over a difference in the dialect of the Slovak language to

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 17.

⁷⁵Miller, Czecho-Slovaks, p. 121.

be used in worship. In some cities or towns, two congregations would emerge from one, each considering the other an opposition force. The tendency to break into factions hindered the overall union of Slovak Lutherans. Two significant organizations of Slovak Lutherans did emerge, each one considering the other an opponent.

The General Council of the Lutheran Church (in the U. S.) was established in May, 1866. It consisted of representatives of many Lutheran synods - a confessional gathering of all who confessed the "Unaltered Augsburg Confession."⁷⁶ The Missouri Synod declined to join the General Council, and, with a few other smaller Lutheran synods, formed the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America. The latter union took place in 1872 out of a desire for a declaration on church fellowship.

One of the social clubs organized by the Slovak Lutherans, the Slovak Evangelical Union, initiated movement towards a Slovak Synod. At its Second Annual Convention, the Slovak Evangelical Union called for the formation of a Seniorate of Slovak Lutherans in the United States. This gathering of Slovaks met four times, and on September 2, 1902, formed themselves into the Slovak Evangelical

⁷⁶Neve, Lutheran Church, p. 155.

Lutheran Church (S.E.L.C.). The organizational meeting was held at St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Connellsville, Pennsylvania. The new Synod had strong leanings towards the Missouri Synod, and in 1908, joined the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference. At its formation, the S.E.L.C. contained fifteen congregations and ten pastors; by 1909 it had increased to twenty-four congregations.⁷⁷ In 1933, the organization consisted of sixty congregations.⁷⁸

Early in the history of the S.E.L.C., it was torn by dispute. Disagreement was centered around four issues: the matter of registering with the pastor before participating in Holy Communion; stands on the place and function of fraternal organizations such as the Slovak Evangelical Union; the use of the proper hymnal; and the legalistic strictness of the Slovak church in general. As a result of these disputes, some congregations left the S.E.L.C. Other congregations never joined it, and still other congregations were split over the issues.⁷⁹

In order to band together the congregations which left the S.E.L.C., a new Slovak synod was organized on June 19,

⁷⁷Dolack, Slovak Evangelical Church, p. 82.

⁷⁸Neve, Lutheran Church, p. 249.

⁷⁹Zornan, Slovak Lutherans, p. 4.

1919, at Braddock, Pennsylvania, and was called the Slovak Zion Synod.⁸⁰ This new synod also encouraged those Slovak congregations which had not joined the S.E.L.C. and who were still independent to come together. The Zion Synod was not associated with the Missouri Synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference, but rather chose in 1920 to associate with the United Lutheran Church in America (U.L.C.A.). The U.L.C.A. had been formed from the General Council of the Lutheran Church, which had helped "orphaned" Slovak Congregations, in 1913.

The S.E.L.C. immediately considered the Zion Synod to be an "opposition" synod, and accused them of such. Perhaps due to the friction that existed between the two Slovak synods, the Zion Synod never grew very large. In 1958 there were 49 churches, 41 pastors, 20,000 members, and 8,000 communicants connected with the Zion Synod.⁸¹ The Synod maintained the use of Slovak and English in its services, and it was the transition from Slovak to all English that gave the Synod problems in its history. A Zion official stated in 1958, that "the Zion Synod will soon disappear from the scene as congregations and pastors affiliate with the larger general bodies of Lutherans."⁸²

⁸⁰Ibid.

⁸¹Ibid., p. 5.

⁸²Ibid.

PART FOUR

The Slovaks Come to Hatfield

Settling in America, therefore, meant many things for the Slovak. First, it meant money and jobs. Second, it meant the ability to re-establish church and culture in a new atmosphere. The American experience also meant disagreement and factions for the Slovak. But, they came, dispersed to various areas and settled, always seeking gatherings of their own nationality. In this manner, the Slovaks came to Hatfield.

Within a few weeks of each other, John Adamec, Sr., and Daniel Sunec became the first Slovaks to settle in Hatfield, coming in the year 1890. Adamec had come from Myjava, Slovakia, which is near another town called Turaluka. Most of the Slovaks settling in Hatfield came from these two towns. Adamec and Sunec were soon followed by Paul Holich, Sr., Ondras, Osley, Buczala, Bruscoe, Duga, and Zapka. These family names are still present in Hatfield. The first recorded birth in Hatfield of a child born to Slovakian parents was in 1899 - a child born to the Fuseks.⁸³ The Slovaks came in increasing numbers into

⁸³Hatfield, Records, II.

the 1920's.⁸⁴ Those coming from Myjava and Tura-Luka also settled in nearby Easthampton ("The Four Corners"), attracted by the farm land. The Slovaks in Hatfield and the Four Corners stuck together for social and religious occasions. On Saturdays and Sundays the Slovaks got together for recreation and visiting. In warm weather, they went on picnics "with a keg of beer and whiskey,"⁸⁵ and enjoyed bowling in the woods. Bringing with them a new culture to Yankee Hatfield, the Slovaks were proud of their fine embroidery and needlework, and of their good baking: kolaski (raised bread), siski, (raised donuts), le kuaar (prune butter), and silwoovica (prune whiskey). The manner of immigration into Hatfield, the problems of settling and assimilation, and comments on the time are best shown by looking at the stories of some of the Slovak settlers.

Michael Janos, a carpenter, emigrated directly from Slovakia around 1900, when he was in his teens. In 1910 or 1911 he married Beta (Anglicized to Alberta) Holich, daughter of Paul Holich, Sr. Holich had come in the early 1890's, and Beta followed around 1900 when she was 12 years old. Alberta and Michael Janos had two children, including

⁸⁴Refer to the table on p. 32.

⁸⁵John Adams, personal interview, Hatfield, March 29, 1971.

a daughter named Evelyn. Evelyn was baptized in the Congregational Church in Hatfield. The Janos Family attended (when it was established) St. John's Lutheran Church in Hatfield because of the church's proximity to their home. Prior to that, they had attended the Slovak services in the West Hatfield Chapel where Evelyn received her first communion. In 1948, Evelyn and her mother, Alberta, joined the Congregational Church. Evelyn married a man from one of the original Hatfield "Yankee" families, Arthur Belden.⁸⁶

John Adamec, Sr. (Anglicized to Adams) came to America about 1886. In Myjava, Adamec's wife had died, leaving him with four children to support. His farm was unable to support his family, so, with money from his father, Adamec came to the United States. He managed to find a job working on roads in Pennsylvania upon arriving in the country. He earned little money at that job, so he ran away from the work gang, and eventually landed in Hatfield in 1890. He settled on King Street, and worked on a Main Street farm belonging to a Mr. Pease.

A couple of weeks after Adamec arrived in Hatfield, a Mr. Graves went to New York City to get Daniel Sunec to

⁸⁶Mrs. Arthur (Evelyn) Belden, personal interview, Hatfield, March 13, 1971.

come back and work in his tobacco fields. Sunec had recently arrived from Slovakia. Adamec and Sunec wrote eagerly back to their relatives and friends in Myjava and Tura-Luka telling them of the opportunities for work in the tobacco fields and dairy farms of Hatfield. The dairymen, in particular, offered workers \$30.00 a month for a 16 hour day, seven days a week.

John Adamec's son, John Adamec (who shall be referred to as John Adams) came to Hatfield to join his father in 1896, when he was 15 years old. Adams, who is presently 90 years old, reported that when he came to Hatfield, there were 10 Slovak families living in Hatfield: Holich, two Vachulas, two Fuseks, Buczala, and Adamec. Young Adams sawed wood for Mrs. Dickinson, a Main Street Yankee resident, in order to earn money. To get to Hatfield, Adams came first to New York City. He then took a ferry to Hartford, Connecticut, and a train to Springfield and on to Hatfield. A Mr. Pomeroy met Adams (and his sister who came with him) at the train depot, "and took them and a load of grain back to their father's farm."

Several years after John Adamec, Sr. had settled in Hatfield, his father wrote from Myjava asking him to come back and take over the farm there. Adamec did go back, but only for one year. When he came back to Hatfield, Adamec brought with him another of his daughters, and then sent the money to bring his last child over. Thus the

whole Adamec family was together in Hatfield.

Arthur Bardwell and William Dickinson, from two of the prominent Yankee families in Hatfield, were John Adams' closest friends as he grew up. Adams learned English from them by constant association - even to playing baseball together. He went to the night school that had been established in Hatfield to refine his knowledge of English.

By 1926, Adams owned his own farm at the Four Corners in Easthampton. He bought the six acre farm for \$500.00, and later sold it for \$1,000.00. He bought another farm in the area for \$1,200.00, selling it later for \$4,000.00. His last farm, from which he is now retired and living in Hatfield again, was in the Four Corners area and is worth an estimated \$100,000.00. Adams had nine children - eight sons: John, Steve, Paul, Emil, Ludwig, George, Edwayd, Samuel, and Aaron; one daughter, Anne.⁸⁷

John Podmayerski (later shortened to Podmayer) came from Tura-Luka to New York City sometime prior to 1911. He was a machinist, and came regularly to work in the fields of Hatfield during the summers. Kristine Cernak came from Tura-Luka, at age 16, to New York City, and then to New Jersey. She worked there as a chamber maid. She had lived on a farm in Tura-Luka, near a large orchard. Her family

⁸⁷John Adams, personal interview.

raised their own cows, chickens, and wheat. "We had plenty of donuts and milk, what more did we want."

In 1921, John Podmayerski and Kristine Cernak were married. The first years in the United States were the hardest for them. Kristine learned broken English from a book. Even as their two sons, John and William grew up, the Podmayers used Slovak in the home. In fact, the two sons had to stay two years in the first grade of elementary school because they didn't know English.

Shortly after their marriage, the Podmayers moved to Hatfield permanently, settling in West Hatfield. Kristine was widowed early, and when the children were about six, she thought of going back to Tura-Luka. She had saved some money, and sent it back to her father-in-law so that he could build a store. She planned to go back with her sons and run the store. However, the father-in-law, after building the store, gave it to his other son.

Kristine and William, one of her sons, are now members of the Congregational Church. Both of her sons had been baptized there and it wasn't until William was married that he and his mother left St. John's church.⁸⁸

⁸⁸Mrs. John (Kristine) Podmayer, personal interview, West Hatfield, March 27, 1971.

Paul Cernak came from Slovakia to Hatfield, settling on Prospect Street. His wife, Anna Fusek, was born in Hatfield. Her parents had come from Tura-Luka (her father) and Myjava (her mother, an Osley) to Hatfield prior to 1900. Her parents were married in Hatfield and settled on Chestnut Street. Anna's parents spoke only broken English, and spoke Slovak in their home; Anna was taught Slovak. They attended the Congregational Church, but later joined St. John's Lutheran Church. Anna herself was baptized in a Lutheran church in Holyoke. Anna is still a member of St. John's church.⁸⁹

⁸⁹Mrs. Paul (Anna) Cernak, personal interview, Hatfield March 16, 1971.

PART FIVE

The Second Protestant Church in Hatfield

The majority of the Slovaks who came to Hatfield were Protestants, members originally of the Hungarian Lutheran Church. The first few who settled in Hatfield, were, like Slovak immigrants elsewhere, not much concerned with holding services of the Lutheran style in Slovak. As the number of Slovaks increased, however, the desire for services in their own tongue, and for a Slovak pastor, increased. The religious history of the Slovaks in Hatfield is in four stages, culminating in the organization of their own congregation. In 1928, the two hundred and fifty-eight year reign of the Congregational Church as the only Protestant church in Hatfield ended.

I

In the early years of the Slovaks in Hatfield, they were served in a small way by the Congregational Church and its pastor. A few of the Slovaks attended the services of the Congregationalists. Reverend Robert M. Woods, who was already noted for ministering to Protestant and Catholic immigrants, ministered to the Slovaks with equal love and concern. He married them, baptized their children, and buried them. John Adams recalled his marriage to Kristine

Duga which was performed in 1905 by "Minister Woods." Adams also recalled that his first children were baptized by Woods. Kristine Podmayer recalled that her sons were baptized by the Congregational minister (Albert P. Watson) in her home. To Mrs. Podmayer, "it didn't make any difference whether a Lutheran or Congregational minister officiated, as long as the minister was Protestant." Today, walking through the Center Cemetery on Main Street (behind the Congregational Church), one finds the section set aside for the burial of the Slovak Protestants, all of whom were buried by the Congregational ministers.

However, a barrier still stood between the Yankee Protestants and the Slovaks; a language barrier. Attending the Congregational services was essentially meaningless for the Slovaks, as they could understand little, if any, English. Because of this language barrier and because their numbers were increasing, the Slovaks began holding Slovak services in the vestry (rear hall) of the Congregational Church. These early services were conducted by the Slovaks themselves as they had no pastor or means of securing a Slovak pastor. Indeed, there were extremely few Slovak pastors in all of New England and New York. The exact date that the first of these Slovak services was held is not clear. In the Family Record of the Congregational Church, for the year 1904, there is reference in the church treasurer's report of: "offering at Slovak service \$4.40, expense of

\$1.00 Slovak Communion service (prepared by Mrs. D. E. Shattuck)." This is the first reference of any sort to the Slovaks; it might have been that sometime in 1904 the Slovaks started holding services in the vestry of the church. The regularity of these services is assumed to be a few times a year. After a few years, a Slovak pastor was obtained for these occasional services. A Reverend Engler and a Reverend Novomestsky were the first Slovak pastors to hold services for Hatfield's Slovaks.⁹⁰ The same Family Record (for 1904) indicated the existence of a Slovak Sunday School Class, with an enrollment of nine.

II

The reason for the next step towards the development of a separate Slovak congregation is difficult to determine. One obvious factor was the increase in the number of Slovaks in Hatfield. Not only were the numbers in Hatfield increasing, but Slovaks were settling in neighboring communities. In total, the number was small enough so that all of the Slovaks in Hatfield and the surrounding area were as one unit.

⁹⁰Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, "A Short History of the Holy Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church," West Hatfield, 1950, p. 1. (mimeographed)

They wished to worship together as well as have social times together. Another reason, indicated by one source, was that the "Yankees didn't want us there (in the Church)."⁹¹ There was possible friction between the Yankees and these newcomers who had a different culture and language. It appears that the factors brought on by increasing numbers were the more consequential, although it could be theorized that all of the above factors played together. At any rate, arrangements were made with the Congregational Church for the Slovaks to hold occasional services in the West Hatfield Chapel.

The first Slovak service held in the Chapel was on Easter Day, 1907. This service began a period of twenty-one years in which the Slovaks held services in the Congregational Church's chapel. The rent paid was \$2.00 a service.⁹² Services in the Chapel were not held on a Sunday as the Slovak pastors secured came from New York or Connecticut and were pastors of churches in those areas. The first pastor to serve the Slovaks in the Chapel was the Reverend Daniel Bella of East Port Chester, Connecticut. He held services in the West Hatfield Chapel a few times each year from Easter Day, 1907, until 1910.⁹³

⁹¹Mrs. Paul Cernak, personal interview.

⁹²John Adams, personal interview.

⁹³Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, "Holy Trinity Church," p. 1.

Daniel Bella came to America in 1891 from Nemecka Lupca, Slovakia. A charter member of the Holy Trinity Slovak Lutheran Church in Chicago (the first organized Slovak congregation in Chicago), he was ordained in 1899 and until 1905, served Trinity Church in Cleveland. On November 12, 1905, Bella came to St. Paul's Slovak Lutheran Church, East Port Chester, Connecticut. "At that time there were only two other Slovak ministers serving congregations in New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, and Massachusetts."⁹⁴ Bella was a charter member of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church, and in addition to serving his own congregation and the Slovaks in Hatfield, he served many other widely scattered Slovak congregations.⁹⁵

Slovak pastors were eventually secured for more than once or twice a year. All of the holy days of the Christian year were observed by a service with a Slovak pastor; but again these services were not on Sundays as the pastors always had their own congregations. Daniel Bella was succeeded in 1910 by the Reverend L. J. Karlowsky of Holy Trinity Slovak Lutheran Church, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

⁹⁴Dolack, Slovak Evangelical Church, p. 172.

⁹⁵Ibid.

In 1922, the Reverend Julius I. Bella succeeded Karlovsky, and served until 1927.⁹⁶

III

In 1927, the third stage in the religious history of the Slovaks in Hatfield was reached. The decision was made by the Slovaks to form their own congregation. They had been ministered to by the Congregational Church, through its minister and buildings, since the early 1900's. The older Slovaks were getting impatient; they wanted their own church.⁹⁷ The West Hatfield Chapel, which they had used for twenty years, was becoming too small. Services were crowded as Slovaks continued to come into Hatfield and the surrounding area. Some of the Slovaks expressed the desire "to build where the other churches (in Hatfield) are on Main Street."⁹⁸ There was also a growing consciousness of being a distinct ethnic group - the Chapel was not "their" building. It could become their building, the Slovaks felt, if they were to buy it. At the immediate time, however, the Chapel was not for sale. It was also felt by many, again due to their

⁹⁶Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, "Holy Trinity Church," p. 1.

⁹⁷Mrs. Paul Cernak, personal interview.

⁹⁸Mrs. John Podmayer, personal interview.

ethnic consciousness, that a full time Slovak pastor was needed for the welfare of the children. A Slovak pastor, it was believed, would aid in maintaining the Slovak language and traditions among the second and third generations.⁹⁹

Meetings were held to determine in what manner the Slovaks would secure their own church and establish themselves as a separate Slovak congregation. As they were led to believe that the Chapel was not for sale, the discussion centered around construction. One site was offered as a possibility for the proposed new church building. Located on Elm Street, about a half mile from the center of Hatfield and the other three churches, it was decided not to buy the plot of land.¹⁰⁰ Mrs. John Porter, who owned a house and land on Main Street in the very center of town, was approached by a committee headed by John Fusek (Anna Cernak's brother). She agreed to sell, and after considerable discussion and argument, the Slovaks voted to buy the Porter land and house (for a parsonage), and to erect a new church.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹Mrs. Paul Cernak, personal interview.

¹⁰⁰The site on Elm Street is near the present home of Theodore Celatka.

¹⁰¹Mrs. Paul Cernak, personal interview.

IV

The decision to buy the Porter land was not an easy one for the Slovaks. In fact, the decision was so difficult that it caused a split among the Slovak Lutherans in Hatfield. As one observer viewed the situation, "the conservative group decided not to build and the liberal group did decide to build."¹⁰² Much to the detriment of the Slovaks becoming a unified body, all involved in the decision were relatives.¹⁰³ The majority of the Slovaks did vote to buy the Porter land and build on it; a smaller number, however, would not abide by the decision. This smaller portion of the Slovaks felt that the West Hatfield Chapel should be bought when it became available. Bitterness and antagonism rifted the Slovaks, with the minority accusing the larger group of "stealing funds," to the end that a portion of the Slovaks in Hatfield simply refused to move down to Main Street in order to have their own church.¹⁰⁴

The Slovaks had come a long way since John Adamec, Sr., first came to Hatfield. They had increased in numbers.

¹⁰²Miss Marian C. Billings, personal interview.

¹⁰³Mrs. John Podmayer, personal interview.

¹⁰⁴Mrs. Paul Cernak, personal interview.

They had decided to become an organized congregation - the second Protestant church in Hatfield. However, they became not one congregation, but two. Hatfield's Slovaks, like many Slovak congregations and organizations across the country, became rent with internal disagreements. There emerged in Hatfield after two hundred and fifty-eight years, not two, but three Protestant churches.

V

Once the majority decision had been made to build, the Slovaks began to raise the money necessary to construct a new church edifice. A large sum was raised by subscriptions and by dues. Letters were sent to every Slovak church in the United States seeking financial aid, and "quite a bit of aid was received from these churches."¹⁰⁵ Those families who were involved in building on Main Street were, in part: Adams, John Petcen, Podmayerski, Janos, Osley, Duga, Zapka, Cernak, the "Easthampton" Cernaks, Fusek, Paul Holich, Sr., Sena, and Zima.¹⁰⁶ The members even worked on excavating the foundation for the new church,

¹⁰⁵John Adams, personal interview.

¹⁰⁶Mrs. Paul Cernak, personal interview.

donating what they would receive as hourly wages - in cash - to the building fund.¹⁰⁷

The cornerstone of the new church was laid on September 9, 1928. A service of worship was held on that day in the Congregational Church, conducted by the Reverend Julius I. Bella, the pastor from Bridgeport. The sermon, "Wise and Unwise Builders," was delivered by the Reverend M. F. Benko, of Lansford, Pennsylvania. Greetings were extended to the Slovaks by the Reverend Albert P. Watson of the Congregational Church. Michael Janos placed the cornerstone, which contained a Bible, a copy of Luther's Catechism, a historical sketch of the congregation, and a list of the present members of the church. The cost of the building was estimated at \$15,000.00.¹⁰⁸

Nine months later, on June 16, 1929, the new church was dedicated. The name of the Slovak congregation was: St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church. A dedication service was held at 10:30 A.M. on that day with over 450 in attendance. Once again, the Reverend Julius I. Bella of Bridgeport conducted the service, assisted by the Reverend

¹⁰⁷John Adams, personal interview.

¹⁰⁸Daily Hampshire Gazette (Northampton), September 10, 1928, p. 2.

J. Bellan of Mahanoy, Pennsylvania. The Reverend C. R. Reisch, of Bridgeport, was the speaker and Miss Cernak, of Bridgeport, was the organist. The building committee consisted of: John Adams, who was president of the congregation, Paul Holich, Sr., John Fusek, and Andre Sena. Construction of the new church was done by contractor Michael Janos. The church, built in Gothic style, with arches and beams of oak and walls of pale buff, was "very attractive and (is) a worthy testimony of the loyal, earnest spirit of the members of the congregation, who, despite their small numbers, erected a church worthy of a much larger organization."¹⁰⁹ The windows of stained glass were memorials given by the following individuals and their families: John Fusek, Samuel Osley, John Zapka, Paul Cernak, Paul Holich, Sr., John Petcen, and John Vachula. The large window over the altar, portraying the Resurrection, was a gift of the young people, and the window in the choir loft, "The Good Shepherd," was given by the Church Society.¹¹⁰

After the completion of St. John's, the Slovaks attending there were still without the services of a full time Slovak pastor. The finances of the congregation could

¹⁰⁹Daily Hampshire Gazette (Northampton), June 17, 1929, p.5.

¹¹⁰Ibid.

not afford one. A pastor came on a regular, but infrequent, schedule from Stafford Springs, Connecticut. The congregation was urged to join the Zion Synod of the United Lutheran Church in America, which they did. The Synod provided the congregation with student pastors during the summer months for a few years. The first resident pastor of St. John's Church was the Reverend James Sopko, who came (approximately) in 1940.¹¹¹ Membership at the Slovak church was then about one hundred, its highest peak. It was observed that Miss Marian Billings, and others from the Congregational Church, attended services at St. John's during the summer months when their own church was closed.¹¹² Prior to Sopko's assuming the pastorate of St. John's, the services were in Slovak; during his four years in Hatfield, Sopko introduced English services at St. John's, holding a service in Slovak and one in English each Sunday. After he left in 1944, all of the services were in English.¹¹³

The decision among the Slovaks in Hatfield to build their own church was made in 1927, but the church was not

¹¹¹Mrs. Paul Cernak, personal interview.

¹¹²John Adams, personal interview.

¹¹³Mrs. Paul Cernak, personal interview.

completed until 1929. In the interval, the "minority" group of Slovaks negotiated the purchase of the West Hatfield Chapel.

VI

The West Hatfield Chapel had been built more conveniently to accommodate the members of the Congregational Church living in that area of town. A Sunday School, a Ladies Aide Society, and a monthly service on the fourth Sunday were held in the Chapel. However, distance was no longer a problem with the advent of the automobile and better roads. The Family Record of the Congregational Church for the year 1928 indicated that, in 1927, the practicality of holding services, etc., in the outlying areas of Hatfield was lessening due to a general lack of attendance. Citing from the Family Record,

The long established practice of holding afternoon and evening services in the outlying sections of the town has largely been discontinued. Owing to the small attendance, it was decided to suspend the North Hatfield services early in the year (1927).

It was becoming apparent that the use of the West Hatfield Chapel for similar services would be discontinued as well. Statistics over several years indicated the general decline in the practicality of holding Sunday School and services at the Chapel:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Average Attendance at Sunday School</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Average Attendance at 4th Sunday Service</u>
1889	34	1920	13
1891	22	1921	23
1896	18	1922	20
1899	17	1924	26
1900	15	1925	21
1904	10	1926	17

¹¹⁴ Hatfield Congregational Church, "The Family Record, "Hatfield, for the years cited.

The last service at the West Hatfield Chapel was held on Sunday, May 15, 1927, with an attendance of 17.¹¹⁵

The West Hatfield Union Chapel Society was dissolved early in January of 1928.¹¹⁶ At the same time the Chapel building was sold by the Society to the Slovak Lutherans who had refused to remain with the "Main Street" group. The Chapel was no longer used by the Congregational Church and therefore had lost its usefulness to the members of the Church living in West Hatfield. In the Parish Records of the Congregational Church, the following entry was made on January 14, 1928: "The matter of the disposing of the Chapel at West Hatfield was brought up ... The sale was made to the Hungarian Society." Further on in the Parish Records for 1928 was recorded the following: "We have

¹¹⁵ Hatfield Congregational Church, "The Family Record," January 5, 1928.

¹¹⁶ Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, "History of the Church," p. 1.

received from the Holy Trinity Lutheran Society, on West Hatfield Chapel Account, \$1,256.49."¹¹⁷ The sale of the Chapel was conducted by the Union Chapel Society, and the funds from the sale were given to the Congregational Church as a gift. Again, citing from the Parish Records:

It was voted (on January 19, 1929) that the gift of \$1,400 from the sale of the West Hatfield Chapel be accepted, the same to be known as the West Hatfield Union Chapel Fund, the income from this fund to be used on ordinary parish expenses, and that a vote of thanks be extended to the Trustees of said Chapel for their generosity.¹¹⁸

It was a smaller group of people who engaged in the purchase of the West Hatfield Chapel than had bought the Porter property. Some of the family names were the same, indicating the split that separated the Slovaks. Some of the families involved with the Chapel sale were: Bruscoe, John Osley, Sr., Zapka, Mica, Paul Holich, Jr., Omasta, Belansky (Easthampton), Ondras, and Vachula.¹¹⁹ In November of 1927, the Slovaks who chose to remain in the Chapel building organized under the name: The Holy Trinity Slovak Lutheran Church of West Hatfield. They

¹¹⁷Hatfield Congregational Church, Records of the First Parish of Hatfield, annual meeting 1928, p. 233.(handwritten)

¹¹⁸Ibid., meeting of January 19, 1929, p. 235.
(handwritten)

¹¹⁹Mrs. Paul Cernak, personal interview.

shortly joined the Missouri Synod in a direct relationship, becoming part of the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference. (It is interesting to note that they did not join either the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Synod or the Zion Synod). The Mission Board of the Missouri Synod aided the Holy Trinity congregation until 1940.¹²⁰ The first officers of the new Slovak church were: Reverend John J. Mital, administrator; George Zapka, secretary; Daniel Cernak, treasurer; Paul Micka, Sr., financial secretary; Paul Buczala, president; Stefan Cernak, John Ondras, Sr., and Stefan Bruscoe, Board of Trustees.

The Reverend John J. Mital served the West Hatfield congregation on the second and fourth Sundays of the month with an evening service. His home church was in Stafford Springs, Connecticut. Holy Trinity Slovak Lutheran Church was formally dedicated on October 14, 1928, with a 10:30 A.M. Slovak service. At the service, the Reverend Mital was installed as pastor, and he, along with the Reverend Daniel Bella, conducted the dedication service. Following the service, a dinner was served at the home of John J. Buczala. An English service was held at 2:30 P.M., led

¹²⁰Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, "Holy Trinity Church" p. 3.

by Pastor Mital and the Reverend Franz Willer, of Easthampton.¹²¹

Following the installation of Reverend Mital, services continued to be held on the second Sunday of each month at 10:00 A.M., and on the fourth Sunday at 7:00 P.M. Mital served in this capacity until 1930, when the Reverend Michael M. Havlir became the full time pastor of the church. Havlir, a minister in the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Synod, came from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of North Emporia, Virginia. He was installed at Holy Trinity on December 7, 1930, by the Reverend Mital, and conducted his first service at the church on December 14, 1930.¹²² Services were then held every week - the first time any Slovak in Hatfield was able to attend Slovak services weekly. Reverend Havlir continues to be the pastor of the church today.

A parsonage was built in November of 1931 for \$3,982.¹²³ In 1932, an English service was introduced once a month; prior to this time the services had all been in Slovak. The membership of the church, in 1932, was 194 -

¹²¹ Daily Hampshire Gazette (Northampton), October 16, 1928, p. 1.

¹²² Daily Hampshire Gazette (Northampton), December 19, 1930, p. 5.

¹²³ Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, "Holy Trinity Church", p. 2.

32 families with 42 children. In 1942, two services were held each week, one in Slovak and one in English, and beginning in 1946, the records of the church were kept in both languages.¹²⁴

VII

October 14, 1928, marked the dedication of the former West Hatfield Chapel as the Holy Trinity Slovak Lutheran Church; June 16, 1929, marked the completion of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church. The Congregational Church was now one of three Protestant churches in the town of Hatfield.

The Congregationalists reacted with cordiality. Any further evaluation cannot be made. Present members of the Congregational Church indicated that the organization of two other Protestant churches made no difference to them. It is as if the "Yankees," as the Slovaks then and the older ones today called the Congregationalists, considered it natural that an ethnic group so different in customs and tradition and language would want and should have their own church. There are two recorded "official" reactions of the Congregational Church. On January 8, 1929, "it was suggested that this church extend best wishes and greetings

¹²⁴Ibid., p. 3.

to the two younger Protestant churches in the community - the Holy Trinity and St. John's churches."¹²⁵ In the Family Record printed for the annual meeting of the Congregational Church on January 9, 1929, it was voted:

In Holy Trinity and St. John's churches are gathered the Slovak people of Hatfield and other nearby towns. Our best wishes go out to these new organizations, and we hope that the people of all our churches will work together happily and effectively for the best interests of the Kingdom of God.

¹²⁵Hatfield Congregational Church, Records of the Church, meeting on January 8, 1929, p. 254. (handwritten)

EPILOGUE

It is somewhat ironic that today, the congregation which started as the larger of the two Slovak congregations is now the smaller. St. John's church reached its peak in 1940 when James Sopko became its first, and only, resident pastor. Tragically, Sopko was an acute alcoholic, and his disease drastically affected his ministry. Because of his ineffectiveness, the congregation began to break up; many returned to the former West Hatfield Chapel. Although Sopko was dismissed in 1945, the damage had been done. The congregation could no longer afford a resident minister; as the children grew up, many left the church and the community. The parsonage was sold approximately twenty years ago. Statistics from the Yearbook of the United Lutheran Church in America and the Lutheran Church in America show the decline that took place following Sopko's dismissal:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Pastor</u>	<u>Baptized</u>	<u>Confirmed</u>	<u>Communicant</u>
1945	Andrej Balaska (part time)	135	98	86
1955	----	50	42	35
1962	John Chalupa (part time)	30	30	23
1965	John Chalupa (part time)	-- no figures cited -----		

There are now four families attending St. John's Church: Anna Cernak, John Adams, Kozial (Easthampton), and Edward Vachula.¹²⁶ The congregation, with the approval of the Zion Synod, has offered its land and assets to the Holy Trinity Church, but has been turned down.

The Slovaks in West Hatfield have grown since their organization. The building has been enlarged and remodeled, and in 1950, the congregation reported a membership of 280.¹²⁷ This figure has remained fairly constant, with the majority of members now living outside of Hatfield. Services in Slovak are now held only once a month; all other services are in English.

The two Slovak churches in Hatfield are the only Slovak Lutheran congregations in Massachusetts. They originated out of a need expressed by all Slovaks who immigrated to this country - the need to be together as a compact religious and social unit. The church stood to maintain and protect the unique Slovak traditions of the immigrants. Their religious association began with the Congregational Church, as it was the nearest Protestant church.

¹²⁶Mrs. Paul Cernak, personal interview.

¹²⁷Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, "Holy Trinity Church," p. 5.

When, after many years, enough Slovaks were in Hatfield, they sought their own congregation, only to split because of internal bitterness and antagonisms. Like their brethren elsewhere in America, the Slovaks in Hatfield became divided, each group regarding the other as an opposition; they even joined "opposing" Synods.

That a Slovak congregation did develop in Hatfield is, with the Polish and Irish churches, an indication of the influence and impact of immigration on the town. A once Yankee community became cosmopolitan. The future of these congregations as ethnic entities, however, is dubious. Today, St. Joseph's Church has lost its ethnic character, although it is still referred to as the "Irish" church. Holy Trinity Catholic Church, with a membership consisting largely of third and fourth generation Poles, has lost much of its national basis. The music sung by the choir is still in Polish, as if it were being held on to as the last efforts to keep the church an ethnic church. St. John's still maintains a connection with the Zion Synod, thus giving the church an outward ethnic appearance. Holy Trinity Lutheran Church maintains a limited use of Slovak which, in addition to the church's desire to remain apart from community life in Hatfield, still gives it an ethnic appearance.

St. John's will certainly close in the near future. It has lost its membership and there are no longer first

generation Slovaks entering Hatfield. The West Hatfield church has maintained a larger membership only because it draws from areas outside Hatfield. Very few of Holy Trinity's members speak Slovak primarily. It would seem that those of Slovak descent who wish to maintain their Lutheran tradition would combine once again into one congregation. The split that occurred in 1927 is, essentially, merely past history to many third and fourth generation Slovak Lutherans. The reality of the present situation must be accepted if the Lutherans of Slovak descent are to maintain a significant witness in Hatfield.

The assimilation process has been at work in Hatfield as in every community in the nation. Once distinct immigrant groups with specific religious and cultural traditions have melded into the American melting pot. Given this process, and given the intensifying desire to reunite Protestantism, there might be once again one church in Hatfield containing those of the Protestant tradition.

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